

# ecoNews — Wire —

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

**May 2, 2003**

For immediate release

1. **Beach advisory removed at Lake Darling; Backbone beach remains closed**
2. **Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) sign-up offered, but open for only 19 days**
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## **BEACH ADVISORY REMOVED AT LAKE DARLING; BACKBONE BEACH REMAINS CLOSED**

DES MOINES — A swimming advisory for the beach at Lake Darling in Washington County has been removed.

Although bacteria levels have also dropped at Backbone Lake in Delaware County, the beach there will remain closed while the DNR continues to investigate the wastewater treatment plant at Strawberry Point for alleged violations of its discharge permit. The department is investigating whether effluent from the plant is receiving adequate treatment prior to being discharged into a stream flowing to the Maquoketa River. Backbone Lake, an impoundment of the river, is located between three and four miles downstream from where wastewater treatment plant in Strawberry Point discharges.

Bacteria levels at Iowa's 33 other state park beaches are within acceptable levels.

A public meeting to share beach monitoring results from Backbone State Park will be held at 7 p.m. Wednesday, May 7, at the Franklin Hotel in Strawberry Point.

The DNR will present beach monitoring results for Backbone Lake and then receive questions and input from the public. The meeting is open to everyone.

Weekly beach monitoring results are posted on the DNR's website every Friday afternoon at <http://www.state.ia.us/dnr/organiza/ppd/beach2003.htm>.

**For more information, contact Kevin Baskins at (515) 281-8395 or Mary Skopec, 319-335-1575.**

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## **CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CRP) SIGN UP OFFERED; BUT OPEN FOR ONLY 19 DAYS**

DES MOINES — The U.S. Department of Agriculture will open its 26<sup>th</sup> general sign up for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). The program is open to all agricultural landowners.

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) officials report that 160,000 acres of CRP contracts are set to expire in the next two years. The landowners with those contracts that expire on Sept. 30, 2003, and Sept. 30, 2004, are also eligible.

“This is a great opportunity for landowners to enroll entire fields or parts of fields into CRP,” said Ken Herring, private lands program supervisor with the DNR’s wildlife bureau. “But the window to sign up is short, there is only 19 working days to do it.”

The sign up begins Monday and runs through May 30. The sign up is done at the local FSA office and can take as little as two hours. The statewide rental payment rate has averaged about \$100 per acre, Herring said.

“We want to work with landowners to make sure we get the right mix of land to improve water quality, provide wildlife habitat and to reduce erosion,” he said. “We also want to maximize the benefits to the landowners and make sure it is good for them financially.”

The most important thing is to get the message out to our farmers and landowners that the sign up is happening now and lasts for only a few weeks, Herring said. “They have to move fast.”

**For more information, contact Bruce Cordes at 515-254-1540 ext. 481, or by e-mail at [bruce.cordes@ia.usda.gov](mailto:bruce.cordes@ia.usda.gov).**

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## **SPILLS AND BYPASSES OCCUR THROUGHOUT STATE**

DES MOINES — The DNR has been investigating spills and bypasses throughout the state this week, many related to heavy rainfall.

In northeast Iowa, approximately 10,000 gallons of wastewater was bypassed to the Volga River at Maynard on May 1 after a float became stuck on a lift station pump. The bypass occurred for about 20 minutes. There are no downstream public water supplies.

The city of Dubuque had to pump an undetermined amount from the Key Way Drive sanitary sewer system into the storm sewer for approximately two hours late Wednesday

and early Thursday morning to relieve pressure on the system due to heavy rainfall. The storm sewer would eventually flow to the Mississippi River.

In Asbury an unknown amount of wastewater bypassed into the Little Maquoketa River after heavy rains overwhelmed a lift station in Asbury the evening of April 30. Although pumps ran at full capacity, the lift station could not keep up with the volume until rainfall decreased. Bypassing stopped at about 1:30 a.m. on May 1.

In Clayton about 25 tons of 32 percent nitrogen fertilizer spilled when a tank overflowed at the Patterson Brothers facility early on the morning of April 27. The spill occurred while the tank was being filled and operators diked the area and pumped up the product. About ten to 15 tons of nitrogen are unaccounted for and apparently soaked into the ground inside the mine where the incident occurred.

Less than 5 gallons of turbine oil spilled at Alliant Energy in Cedar Rapids, possibly through a leak in a seal. The oil was pumped through the plant sumps into Cedar Lake on the afternoon of April 28. The plant sump pumps were shut down and adsorbent booms were placed at the narrows to collect the oil.

In southwest Iowa, about 28,000 gallons of wastewater bypassed to the Boyer River in Dow City for about 24 hours beginning the morning of April 30 after a power failure to a lift station. Downstream water supplies at Council Bluffs, Omaha and St. Joseph were notified, along with Nebraska and Missouri DNRs.

At Diamondhead Lake in Guthrie County an unknown amount of wastewater was bypassed to the lake after a pump failed and a line leaked at a new lift station on April 30. The bypass occurred for about four and one-half hours.

In northwest Iowa, the Sioux City fire department reported an oil slick on the Floyd River to the DNR on April 30. The fire department found an unknown amount of petroleum coming from a storm water outfall in Sioux City. Booms have been placed at the outfall to collect petroleum products and prevent them from entering the river.

In Storm Lake, an undetermined amount of petroleum product was released into the lake on April 30 after about one inch of rain the night before. The petroleum product was traced to the stormwater outfall near the Lake Patrol Station. Three adsorbent booms have been placed to protect the lake.

**For more information, contact Kevin Baskins at (515) 281-8395.**

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**CHEMICAL SPILLS AND MANURE RELEASES MUST BE  
REPORTED TO THE DNR**

DES MOINES — Releases of manure and hazardous substances such as chemicals, fertilizers and pesticides must be reported to the DNR within six hours after the release occurs or is discovered.

“It’s easy to forget to call the DNR when you’re trying to clean up or stop a spill, but it’s to your advantage to give us a call,” said Bill Jinkinson, supervisor of the DNR Mason City field office.

While the law requires reporting, the DNR field office staff is experienced and can help with ideas to minimize damages to the environment and figure out how best to clean-up the site, he added. Plus, we have an emergency response team that can be called upon for advice with spills of all types.

Often in the midst of a spill, the tendency is to panic which is another reason that the field office staff can help.

During regular business hours, spills and releases should be reported to the appropriate DNR field office listed below:

- Northeast Iowa, Manchester Field Office, 563-927-2640;
- North Central Iowa, Mason City Field Office, 641-424-4073;
- Northwest Iowa, Spencer Field Office, 712-262-4177;
- Southwest Iowa, Atlantic Field Office, 712-243-1934;
- South Central Iowa, Des Moines Field Office, 515-725-0268; or
- Southeast Iowa, Washington Field Office, 319-653-2135.

After hours, or on holidays or weekends, spills and releases should be called in to the 24-hour spill line at 515-281-8694.

Spills must also be called in to the local police department or county sheriff’s office.

More information can be found on the DNR website at [www.iowadnr.com](http://www.iowadnr.com).

**For more information, call Bill Jinkinson, Supervisor, DNR Mason City Field Office, at 641-424-4073.**